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When Eurosceptics become Europhiles: far-right opposition to Turkish involvement in the European Union

Katy Brown

*Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies, University of Bath, Bath,
United Kingdom*

k.j.brown@bath.ac.uk

When Eurosceptics become Europhiles: far-right opposition to Turkish involvement in the European Union

Turkey's involvement in the European Union has long provoked controversy among Europe's elites. Recently, in the context of the so-called 'migrant crisis', coupled with the mainstreaming of Islamophobia and rising Euroscepticism, the issue of Turkey has acquired renewed significance. While many scholars have linked hostility towards Turkey with the desired construction of a supra-national European identity, few have noted the role it plays in the discourse of parties that explicitly reject the EU. Adopting a mixed-methods approach to Critical Discourse Studies, this paper investigates the contemporary construction of Turkey as a dangerous 'other' by far-right parties in the United Kingdom (UKIP) and France (FN/RN). Drawing on theories of Orientalism, Islamophobia and civilizationism, it exposes the apparent contradiction in the strongly Eurosceptic positions adopted by these parties, while simultaneously rejecting Turkish involvement based on its supposed 'non-Europeanness'. They thus become defenders of Europe while simultaneously undermining the supra-national EU project.

Keywords: Islamophobia; Orientalism; Turkey; far right; Europe; discourse

Introduction

Turkish involvement in the European Union (EU) has long provoked controversy and debate among Europe's elites, with opposition mounting in the early-2000s after serious discussions regarding the country's prospective accession commenced. Although these negotiations have since faltered, recently, in the context of the so-called 'migrant crisis' in Europe, coupled with the mainstreaming of Islamophobia (Kallis 2015; Mondon and Winter 2017) and rising Euroscepticism (Pirro, Taggart and van Kessel 2018), the issue of Turkey has surfaced again with renewed vigour. For example, the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement to reduce the number of refugees reaching Europe sparked controversy and the prospect of Turkish accession featured heavily in the discourse of those advocating Britain's exit from the EU in 2016 (Startin 2017, p.462), with Nigel Farage, a key figure in the campaign, declaring that 'Turkey in means Britain out' (Farage 18/03/2016).

Scholars have linked hostility towards Turkey with the desired construction of European identity (Tekin 2008; Challand 2009), whereby a 'binary typology', defining the *We* 'by the negation of the *Other*' (Delanty 1995, p.5), is used as an identity-building tool. Indeed, arguments predicated on the supposed 'cultural incompatibility' of Turkey, employing both overt and latent references to its status as a predominantly Muslim country, are prevalent in these discourses (Aksoy 2009; Hurd 2010) and serve to delineate the imagined limits of 'Europeanness'. However, while the construction of a 'supra-nationalist' identity (Hülse 2006) is clearly of interest to those engaged in supporting the EU, few studies have noted the role of Turkey in the discourse of parties that explicitly reject Europe. These parties, which obviously have no stake in politically unifying Europe and are openly Eurosceptic, ardently defend it in order to reject Turkey based on its supposed 'non-Europeanness'.

To investigate this seeming paradox, the paper explores the contemporary discursive construction of Turkey as a pernicious *other* by far-right, Eurosceptic parties in the United Kingdom and France, drawing on theories of Islamophobia (Garner and Selod 2015) and Orientalism (Said 1979) to frame cross-linguistic analysis. It adopts a novel approach, which combines the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) with elements of Discourse Theory (DT) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) to analyse references to Turkey on the official party websites of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Front National/Rassemblement National (FN/RN) over the past five years. Ultimately, it underlines that excluding Turkey by means of 'cultural incompatibility' does not constitute a new phenomenon linked to EU integration but instead forms part of a longer tradition of racism towards 'the Orient'.

Turkey: not part of the ‘family’

The polemic of potential Turkish accession to the EU has sparked a great deal of academic interest, with scholars exploring policy implications (Burrell and Oskam 2005; Arikan 2006), economic factors (Flam 2004; Togan 2009) and attitudes (Ruiz-Jiménez and Torreblanca 2007; Gerhards and Hans 2011). Studies of elite and media discourse (Yilmaz 2007; Negrine *et al.* 2008; Tekin 2008) have focused on the period following the 1999 EU Council summit in Helsinki, when Turkey was accepted as a candidate country for membership. There has been comparably less interest over recent years, yet Turkey’s renewed importance in current debates means that its contemporary discursive construction merits investigation.

Opposition to Turkey within Europe has largely been interpreted as a mode of constructing European identity by providing an *other* from which it can be distinguished (Challand 2009; Hurd 2010). Indeed, Hülse (2006) argues that there has been an attempt to form a supra-nationalist identity within the EU, in which ethnopolitical rhetoric creates exclusivist distinctions between those who ‘belong’ and those who do not. For example, the metaphor of the ‘European family’ constructs a rigid ingroup from which outgroups are irretrievably separated. Regarding Turkey, members of the ‘family’ are defined by what they are not, with racialized cultural distinctions increasingly replacing or complementing political and economic arguments for exclusion (Aksoy 2009, p.471). Such strategies of differentiation have a long history, and indeed, Arcan (2012) demonstrates the enduring relevance of Said’s (1979) seminal work on Orientalism, underlining the ways in which language is used to undermine Turkey’s ‘Western’ characteristics and emphasise its ‘non-European’ identity. Given the way in which religion is used to construct these distinctions (Casanova 2006; Challand 2009), Kumar’s (2012) work underscoring the dynamic influence of Orientalism on the development of Islamophobic myths provides an important bridging point between the two and highlights the association between historical and contemporary othering.

Far-right civilizationism

While creating a bonded European ‘family’ may be attractive to those engaged in integration, its validity as an explanation must be questioned when opposition to Turkey is expressed fervently by those wishing not to be part of the ‘family’. Euroscepticism is a broad-ranging phenomenon (Leruth *et al.* 2017, p.3), manifesting itself in many ways according to national circumstance, political leaning and temporal context (Taggart 1998; Buturoiu 2016). Given such heterogeneity, this study is limited to far-right, Eurosceptic parties. It is beyond the scope of this article to enter into the numerous debates over labels and definitions for the far right (Carter 2005; Hainsworth 2008; Mudde 2016), but its association with more overt exclusionary nationalism (De Cleen 2017), anti-immigration rhetoric (Skenderovic 2007) and racism (Vieten and Poynting 2016), often in the form of Islamophobia (Fekete 2006; Wodak 2013; Kallis 2018), makes it the natural starting point for exploring anti-Turkey discourse from anti-EU parties. This certainly does not mean to suggest that such issues are limited to the far right alone, and indeed, Boris Johnson’s (18/01/2019) denial of stoking Turkey fears in the Brexit campaign illustrate that studies of mainstream parties and actors in this regard are much-needed.

Brubaker (2017) goes some way to addressing this seeming Eurosceptic-cum-Europhile paradox by underlining the prevalence of civilizationism amongst what he terms ‘national populist parties’, for which the label ‘far-right’ is preferred here based on concerns over the ‘populist hype’ (Glynos and Mondon 2016). He highlights the dichotomous construction of a progressive, liberal and Christianist Europe defending itself against a dangerous and illiberal Islam, noting that ‘even as Euroskeptic [*sic*] populists challenge or reject the Eurozone, Schengen or the European Union itself, they remain culturally as Europeanist as they are nationalist’ (Brubaker 2017, p.1207). The liberal articulation of Islamophobia, which is ‘anchored in a pseudo-progressive narrative in the defence of the rule of law based on liberal

equality, freedom and rights' (Mondon and Winter 2017, p.2162), is employed to reframe (though critically not debunk) the much-criticised notion of a 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington 2007) and reconstruct more overt forms of racism, but ultimately derives from, and serves, the same exclusionary purpose. Turkey provides a pertinent case given that it marks the symbolic frontier of these imagined communities. Critically, it does not only inform us about the nature of opposition to Turkey but also the ongoing development of, and intersection between, Orientalism and Islamophobia in constructing European civilizational identity.

Research design

To uncover these issues, the article aims to explore the way in which Turkey is constructed as an *other* which poses a threat to Europe in UKIP and FN/RN discourse. This focus on othering and threat derives from Kallis' (2012; 2013) work on the fusion between the othering of Muslims and immigrants, and the zero-sum schema in which immigration is portrayed as purely negative economic and cultural competition. A rigorous methodological, data collection and analytical programme is outlined below.

Methodology

This research draws on Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) for its ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations, yet incorporates other approaches to support and strengthen the process. Specifically, Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to CDS is selected due to its emphasis on the principle of triangulation, which allows theoretical, analytical and methodological plurality. Tekin (2008, p.733) regards the DHA's distinguishing quality as 'its endeavor to transcend the purely linguistic dimension and to include historical, political, sociological and psychological dimensions in the analysis of a specific discursive event.' Indeed, Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p.93) advocate contextualising the data at various levels, comprising intra- and inter-textual, contemporary and historical

socio-political contexts. Thus, such an approach acknowledges ‘the importance of past representations for current constructs of understanding’ (Tekin 2008, p.737), which, given Kumar’s (2012) emphasis on the association between Orientalism and modern Islamophobia, is critical to unveiling the discursive evolution of these ideas.

The principle of triangulation within the DHA extends to the use of mixed methods for richer interpretations. Thus, this study incorporates elements of Discourse Theory (DT) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) to address any potential areas of weakness in analysis, strengthen the validity of findings and provide alternative insights unavailable in traditional CDS. Elements of DT are incorporated to provide a clear framework for the first phase of Reisigl and Wodak’s (2009, p.93) three-stage analytical process. While significant detail is offered regarding the latter two steps, which consist of detailed textual analysis, the first, which involves identifying ‘the specific contents or topics of a specific discourse’, is lacking in practical guidelines for its attainment. Consequently, some of the basic concepts of DT established by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) – articulation, signifiers and nodal points – are used to derive an overview of the themes and arguments espoused. Turkey is explored as a nodal point, which is understood as a ‘privileged signifier’ that ‘bind[s] together a particular system of meaning’ (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000, p.8). By investigating the signifiers with which Turkey as a nodal point is articulated, the first phase of the DHA is approached systematically, building a web of articulatory patterns across the data, which then provides a useful structural framework for the phases of close textual analysis.

Further to DT, techniques associated with CL are employed with the aim of mitigating potential accusations of bias, which is generally acknowledged to be one of the principal criticisms levelled at CDS (Charteris-Black 2014, p.148) and one of the primary benefits of incorporating CL (Thornbury 2010, p.273). CL’s ‘grounding in quantification’ (Baker 2006, p.9) has proved problematic for some, because paradigmatic purists may argue that CDS and

CL derive from opposing philosophical traditions. However, if CL takes on a limited and secondary role, it can be used to strengthen qualitative interpretations, rather than draw the research into positivism. This paper does not seek unrealistic objectivity, yet techniques that reduce the capacity of others to discredit findings because of bias and allow CDS to ‘separate itself from polemic’ (Baker 2012, p.255) should be welcomed.

Case selection

Two cases are selected for comparison, deriving from the need for in-depth, detailed analysis while facilitating greater contextualisation. Consideration of historical and contemporary context is crucial to successful application of the DHA, and the UK and France were judged appropriate cases for inclusion because they display important similarities and differences in this respect. The countries’ shared history of colonialism in the Middle East provides an important point of convergence because Kumar (2012, p.39) states that, ‘Orientalism as a body of thought was tied directly to the project of imperial conquest.’ Indeed, Said (1979, p.4) regards Orientalism as largely ‘a British and French cultural enterprise’. Furthermore, in contemporary contexts, Mondon and Winter (2017, p.2154) point to studies indicating that ‘anti-Muslim biases’ are prevalent in both countries. This does not mean to suggest that such issues are absent from other European countries, but that the two cases are highly relevant and could therefore point to wider trends meriting further investigation.

Aside from these similarities, in central issues related to this topic there are some notable differences. First, despite declining religiosity (Voas and Crockett 2005), the UK remains nominally a Christian country; French secularism (*laïcité*), meanwhile, is enshrined in law and has recently been weaponised by both extreme and mainstream parties for the purposes of articulating Islamophobia (Mondon 2015). Secondly, while France was an EU founding member, the UK is described as an ‘awkward partner’ (Buller 1995), with its fractious

relationship coming to a head in the 2016 referendum. Finally, Negrine *et al.* (2008) note that Turkish accession has received less press coverage in the UK than France. However, its prominence within the 2016 referendum campaign indicates greater significance recently.

Within the two countries, parties were chosen according to three principal requirements: (1) a negative stance towards Turkey, (2) a strongly Eurosceptic position and (3) an association with the far right. While the FN/RN's inclusion according to these criteria would be refuted by few, UKIP has been less commonly situated within the far-right category (Akkerman, de Lange and Rooduijn 2016, p.6). Furthermore, Brubaker (2017, p.1193) excludes UKIP from his conception of civilizationist parties on the basis that it 'has been much less rhetorically preoccupied with Islam' than other European far-right parties. However, this paper underlines the need to reconsider its exclusion from both categories.

Article collation

A five-year period, between 2013 and (1st July) 2018, was selected to address contemporary debates and to incorporate events in which European politics featured more prominently on national stages: the European Parliamentary elections (2014), the EU-Turkey Statement (2016) and the United Kingdom referendum on leaving the EU (2016). Any articles containing the word 'Turkey' or 'Turquie' during this period were collated from the official UKIP and FN/RN websites, which, given that parties themselves determine their content, should provide highly relevant data. Although adjectives such as 'Turkish' or 'turb/que' could have been included, the Google function utilised here (Wainwright 23/03/2013) does not accommodate multi-term searches without repeated results, indicating that significant data overlap would occur.

This process resulted in a total of 15,880 words for the FN/RN and only 6,151 for UKIP. While this could reflect Turkey's less significant role in British discourse (Negrine *et al.* 2008) UKIP have another website, *UKIP MEPs*, which contains articles and videos pertaining to EU

issues. The same data selection procedure was followed for the second website, resulting in 15,690 words to analyse. Clearly, limitations must be acknowledged, as articles from *UKIP MEPs* are likely less frequently accessed than those on the main websites, indicating potentially limited influence, but they still have value in revealing Turkey's discursive construction. Finally, parties may delete certain pages, signifying that the final data set may not provide a fully comprehensive picture of anti-Turkey discourse. Nevertheless, the substantial and balanced data sets collected for each case are judged sufficient for the purposes of this research.

Data analysis

Following the DHA, coding proceeded from broad to detailed textual analysis. The first phase sought to map themes and examine their interaction around the nodal point of Turkey. To achieve this, qualitative and quantitative analyses were employed interactively, as advocated by Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013, p.27). First, to establish 'macropropositions' (van Dijk 1997b, p.27), each article was coded according to its principal idea. Within this, recurring discourse topics, which constitute 'the information that we usually remember best of a discourse' (van Dijk 1997a, p.11), were identified. Next, *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarrieff *et al.* 2014), was used to derive single- and multi-term keyword lists for each case. Keyness is defined as, 'the statistically significantly higher frequency of particular words or clusters in the corpus under analysis in comparison with another corpus' (Baker *et al.* 2008, p.278). Large reference corpora comprising millions of words (*English Web 2015* and *French Web 2012*) were used to calculate terms of 'outstanding' frequency in the texts. These words were then grouped together under broader themes, both reflecting or adding to the macropropositions identified initially. Finally, associations between ideas were mapped in order to explore how the articulation of themes creates a web of meaning around Turkey as a nodal point.

This process indicated areas for more detailed investigation. First, political, economic and cultural arguments for exclusion were coded. Next, nodes were created for the five Islamophobic myths deriving from Orientalism which Kumar (2012, pp.41-60) identifies as: *Islam is a monolithic religion, Muslims are incapable of democracy and self-rule, the 'Muslim mind' is incapable of reason and rationality, Islam is an inherently violent religion and Islam is a uniquely sexist religion*. While there are many other features which may characterise Orientalism and Islamophobia, Kumar (ibid.) pinpoints the principal areas of convergence and development between the two, so these myths serve as a starting point for more varied interpretations. The final phase of coding examined how discursive strategies, such as nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation and mitigation/intensification (Reisigl and Wodak 2009, p.94), are employed to achieve the above constructions. Textual features and devices were explored both through more traditional techniques associated with CDS (Richardson 2006; Machin and Mayr 2012) and through CL tests of collocation and concordance. This multifaceted process was followed by the creation of coding matrices, which allow nodal cross-referencing to identify patterns and salient interpretations.

Findings

The results of the above analysis are integrated to demonstrate the overall narrative surrounding Turkey. Very few significant differences were found between UKIP and FN/RN discourses, so many findings apply to both cases. Any differences are, however, highlighted.

Turkey: geographically and historically non-European

Before exploring the principal signifiers with which Turkey is articulated, it is important to acknowledge how parties lay the groundwork for exclusion by invoking discourses of spatial and temporal differentiation. This underlines the similarities between 'old' and 'new' racisms (Balibar 1991) because such arguments may be devoid of notions of biological superiority

(though this may still be implied), but supposed historical and geographical ‘facts’ create almost-innate distinctions which cannot be erased.

Geographically separate

*we will fight tirelessly against its accession quite simply because **Turkey is not a European country**. (FN/RN, 01/05/2016)*

One of the principal othering strategies employed by the parties is to claim that Turkey is not geographically European. Statistics about the percentage of Turkey falling within Europe are used to build an argumentation strategy of incontrovertible truth, particularly by UKIP. Such ‘facts’ often serve the purpose of attempting to increase credibility (Machin and Mayr 2012, p.83) and project an image of scientific objectivity, yet the fallacy of these claims of truth is underlined by the variation in figures cited, indicating their firm grounding in ideology. Such statistics are integrated more sparsely in FN/RN texts, yet geographical othering is manifested through the repeated use of lists linking Turkey negatively, often referring to terrorism, to other countries associated with ‘Muslimness’, such as Morocco, Algeria, Iran, etc. This demonstrates the structural emphasis on Turkey’s link to a bloc of countries united by their association with Islam, thereby invoking the myth of a monolithic religion and implying the existence of a unitary ‘Orient’. As Durrheim and Dixon (2001, p.434) state, ‘the social construction of place is rooted in ideological struggle’, providing an outlet for the naturalisation of cultural, and therefore racial, exclusions through the perceived ‘innocence of place’ (ibid., p.448). Thus, by excluding Turkey from Europe and linking it consistently to other Muslim-majority countries, geography becomes a mode of constructing immutable and negative difference akin to traditional forms of racism.

Historically distinct

*We are naïve if we think trade and membership of this Parliament can change **a culture that has been developed over many centuries**. (UKIP, 15/12/2015)*

History plays an integral role in naturalising these geographical arguments and in enshrining the notion that cultural difference equates to insurmountable incompatibility. Turkey's past is presented as brutal and backward, with such negative features associated explicitly and implicitly with Islam, which is said to have a regressive influence on contemporary society. Critically, Turkey's history is contrasted, in typical Orientalist fashion (Amin-Khan 2012, p.1597), with the 'superiority' of Europe's past, which is depicted to derive from a variety of 'unique' successes: from contributions to the arts (FN/RN, 02/10/2017) to establishing rights for women (UKIP, 07/06/2016). To exclude Turkey, Marine Le Pen defines Europe through a vision of its past based on nostalgia (Betz and Johnson 2004):

*Peoples who **through their own brilliance discovered the world and brought so much to it**. [...] I return to the definition articulated by Paul Valéry, regarding any people or any country as European provided they have been "**Romanised, Christianised** and, in matters of the mind, **subject to the teachings of the Greeks**". I believe in the common destiny of the nations and peoples of Europe which are **steeped in a shared history of age-old civilisation**. (FN/RN, 02/10/2017)*

Despite the strongly Eurosceptic position of the party, Le Pen employs intensification strategies in the form of hyperbole (Richardson 2006, pp.65-6) to highlight Europe's historical and future unity. Emphasising shared history and culture is a principal EU strategy for fostering allegiance and loyalty to European integration (Shore 1993). However, this is clearly not Le Pen's objective, with such a distinction instead serving to advance ethno-exclusivist and civilizationist divisions of an enlightened West and backward East.

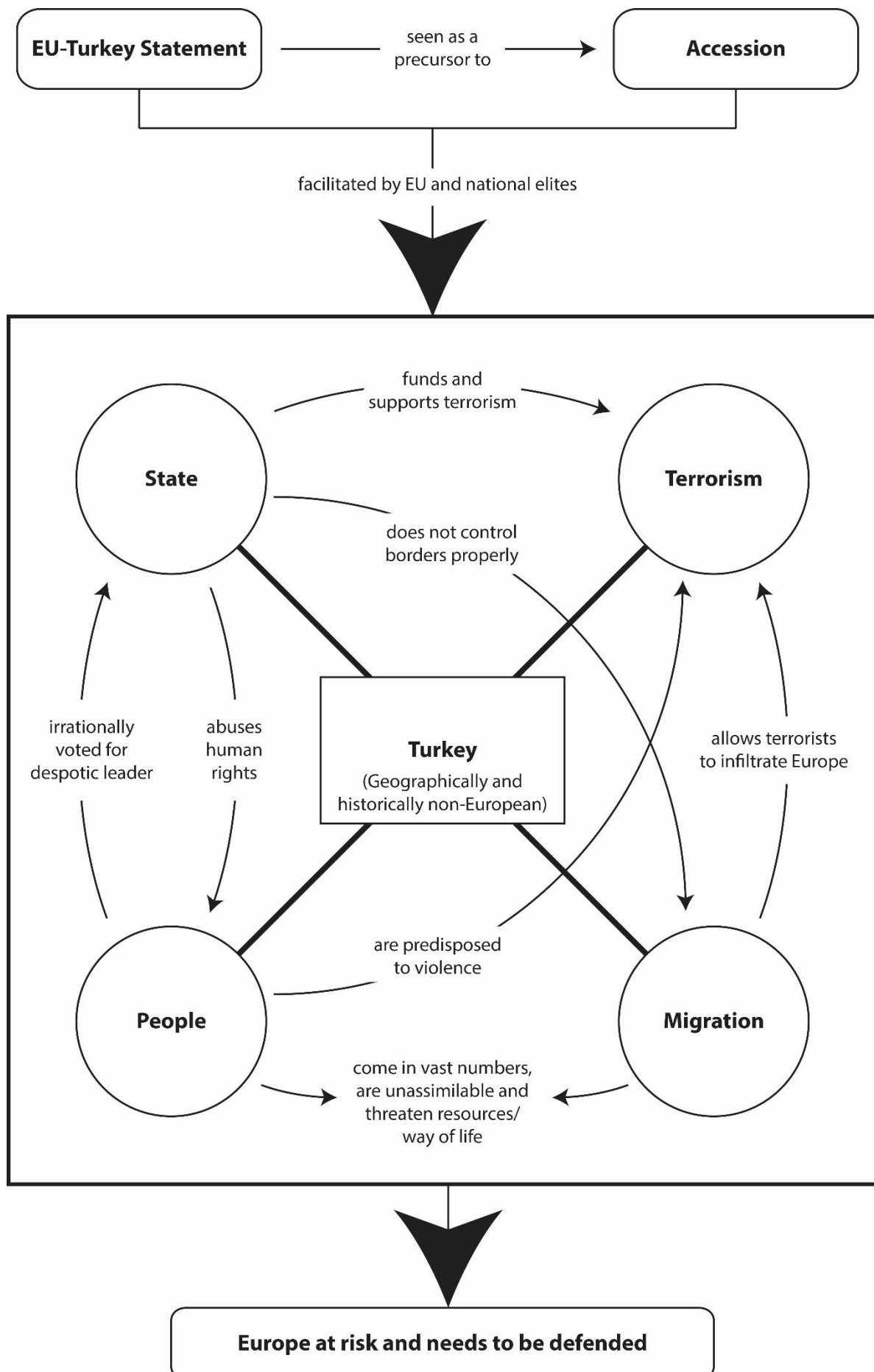
A further contradiction is evident when Le Pen characterises Europe through its Christian heritage, given that the FN/RN have seemingly become staunch defenders of *laïcité*

(French secularism). The party's manipulation of *laïcité* to target Islam and discriminate against Muslims has been widely acknowledged (Shields 2014; Mondon 2015; Almeida 2017), and the exclusionary use of Christianity here simply confirms the party's selective commitment to secularism. As regards the othering of Turkey, Christianity becomes 'a civilizational idea, political culture and lifestyle' (Yilmaz 2007, p.298) which has developed over time to become the bastion of progress: 'by assuming that those values can be acquired by a community only in the long durée of history and by way of generational transmission, it ascribes a 'genetic' characteristic to European identity' (ibid. p.299). As such, Turkey can never be considered part of this religious and civilizational history, and culture becomes an incontrovertible characteristic creating dualistic divisions.

Turkey as a nodal point

Having laid the groundwork for exclusion, further discourses of othering and threat are articulated together around the nodal point of Turkey. These broad signifiers and their articulation are presented within the boxed area of *Figure 1*, which is the principal focus of these findings, whereas other factors contributing to the overall narrative form, which establish the rationale for opposing Turkey, are located outside this area. Most articles within the data set centre on two key policy areas – the EU-Turkey Statement and accession – and while the details of these negotiations are not the focus here, they serve to activate the signifiers into presenting a threat for Europe. Thus, the EU-Turkey Statement is depicted as a precursor to accession, facilitated by both EU and national elites, who are portrayed as accomplices in Europe's impending 'invasion' and consequent downfall. These factors ensure that Turkey is rendered dangerous, and a protective stance allows far-right parties to present themselves as saviours.

Figure 1. Articulated signifiers and narrative form



The following analysis derives its structure from the above diagram, which emphasises the importance of articulation in constructing ‘a more or less novel arrangement of meaning’ (De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017, p.305). Thus, should the boxed area be split down the middle, the two left-hand signifiers of *state* and *people* could simply be considered ‘othering strategies’, but articulated with *terrorism* and *migration*, Turkey becomes a specific kind of threatening *other*. For the purposes of clarity, findings are presented in terms of othering and threat, but their mutual reinforcement will be highlighted throughout.

Turkey as an ‘other’

It is too big, too poor and too different from us. (UKIP, 04/05/2016)

The articulation of ideas around the nodal point of Turkey underlines that the country undergoes constant negative outgroup depiction, consistent with van Dijk's (2015, pp.73-4) ‘ideological square’. As highlighted above in terms of geographical and historical distinctions, exploring these strategies of differentiation through the lens of Orientalism and resulting Islamophobic myths underlines their racist foundations.

State: a political ‘other’

he’s dreaming of a new Ottoman Empire and an Islamised Europe. (FN/RN, 25/02/2016)

The Turkish government is criticised for human rights abuses, purposely lax border controls and for both funding and ideologically supporting terrorism. The first of these accusations is grounded in significant evidence (Amnesty International 2018b), yet the sincerity of this supposed desire to protect Turkish citizens is undermined by the bi-directional articulation between people and state, explored in greater detail below: the people of Turkey are accused almost of inflicting their own oppression by voting for Erdoğan (FN/RN, 02/11/2015; UKIP, 06/04/2017) and are therefore implicated in criticisms levelled at the government. The duplicity

of this argument is further compounded by the support UKIP and the FN/RN (and their associated campaigns) have demonstrated towards the Russian state for example (Leave.EU 12/12/2017; Guardian 24/03/2017), which is also accused of violating human rights (Amnesty International 2018a).

Furthermore, broad concordance searches of '*Erdoğan*', '*President*' and '*leader*' uncovered Orientalist nomination strategies and metaphors alluding to empire, such as '*sultan*', '*Ottoman*' and a '*future caliphate*'. Thus, despite legitimate concerns over Erdoğan's actions towards Turkish people (Challand 2009, p.70), the use of Orientalist strategies underlines the connoted and implicit meaning behind the criticisms to create a form of cultural othering. Metaphors, 'a central component of human cognition' (Bougher 2012, p.145), affect the way people perceive the issues to which they are applied (Boeynaems *et al.* 2017, p.118). By associating Erdoğan with historical divisions through metaphor, the parties imply that he forms part of a longer tradition of problematic leaders and political tension between East and West, rather than an isolated case.

The role of Islam in this negative judgement is not left to inference, with predication strategies employed to create a regular association between it and the AK Party/Erdoğan. The common collocation of words implying authoritarianism with adjectives pertaining to Islam subtly reinforces the myth that it is anti-democratic in nature. As such, Islam above all else is portrayed as central to the ideology and actions of the Turkish government, implying a cultural rather than political problem. This insinuation is further compounded by the use of metonymic replacements:

*It is a **country** that is barely democratic, where free speech is increasingly attacked. It is a **country** that has a disgraceful human rights record. A **country** that is accused of aiding and abetting Islamic State* (UKIP, 29/04/2016).

Although these issues stem from state actions, Turkey as a whole is discursively implicated. In both UKIP and FN/RN texts, collocation and concordance of '*Turkey*' reveal its prominence as the subject of the verb, actively replacing references to the government. While metonymy can be used to obfuscate blame (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, p.57), here it serves to present a political problem as reflective of an endemic, societal one; not only does the government attack progressive values, the country and people therein are deemed complicit.

People: a civilizational 'other'

*a timely reminder of the **fundamental differences between Turkish and European values***
(UKIP, 20/01/2016)

Closely associated with this conflation of the political and societal is the representation of Turkish civilization as irretrievably 'different' from that of Europe. Turkish people are placed at the heart of the country's incompatibility, both politically and culturally. Voters are blamed for Erdoğan's success and lack of progressiveness:

*the recent constitutional referendum in Turkey signals the end of democracy. The result in itself was highly dubious, given the accusations of electoral fraud. But even so, **a large number of Turks voted against democracy and in favour of a form of dictatorship.***
(UKIP, 06/04/2017)

The numerous contradictions within this quote demonstrate an attempt to simultaneously construct a political and civilizational other, even when one may undermine the other; despite supposedly fraudulent, anti-democratic behaviour from the government, Turkish citizens are said still to have *voted for a dictatorship*, a contradiction in itself. Thus, through their articulation, political oppression in Turkey becomes the fault of the oppressed.

More generally, Turkey is depicted to hold different values from Europe. Characteristics or actions mostly associated with individuals are ascribed to the whole country, claiming for example that '*she has a mindset totally at odds with that of European ideals*' (UKIP,

10/11/2015). Personification of the nation serves to homogenise Turkish people and culture into a monolithic bloc of backwardness. Again, religion is central to this construction, particularly emphasised by the comparison made to Christians living in the Middle East:

*Deliverers of balance and stability, bearers of a centuries-old identity, vectors of harmony in a rich religious tapestry within which they are a fundamental part, **Christians are the guarantors of pluralism in Middle Eastern societies, including Turkey.*** (FN/RN, 10/11/2017)

By constituting the counterpart to this description, Muslims are implied to be lacking in these qualities, replicating most of Kumar's (2012) myths. Consequently, and critically, Turkish people, defined by their 'Muslimness', are depicted not only as different from, but also inferior to Europeans and European cultural heritage.

Turkey as a threat

*That will **alter the balance of power** within the EU, **not only economically but also culturally.*** (UKIP, 28/04/2016)

The above othering strategies do not simply serve as a delineation of difference, because through articulation and narrative form, these 'differences' become a source of danger for Europe. Migration is the vehicle through which Turkey's 'difference' becomes a threat and it holds central importance in both cases studied. This is corroborated by the number of related signifiers ('*migration*', '*migratory*', '*immigration*', '*migrant*', '*mass immigration*', '*migrant crisis*' and '*free movement*') found in the top twenty results for single- and multi-term keywords in both parties. Arguments go beyond classic economic concerns, in which migrants threaten resources and jobs, but take on a cultural characteristic implying civilizational incompatibility, which is amplified and weaponised further when articulated with the implied threat of terrorism.

Migration: economic and cultural threat

*You have declared the **lands of our peoples** “lands open to **mass immigration and Turkish influence.**” (FN/RN, 11/05/2016)*

Opposition to migration can be separated according to two principal arguments based on scale (i.e. too many potential Turkish migrants) and kind (i.e. Turkish migrants are not desirable). They roughly correspond respectively with the topoi of economic competition and cultural threat, yet as revealed below, economic arguments are often associated with underlying cultural exclusions (Hing 1997, p.15). Statistics are used flexibly to amplify the size of Turkey's population, with eight different figures ranging from 72 to 90 million cited regularly, often alongside hyperbolic warnings such as ‘*80 million Turks could now enter Europe*’ (FN/RN, 01/05/2016). The sense of danger to Europe is compounded by water metaphors such as ‘*wave*’, ‘*influx*’ and ‘*infiltration*’, which insinuate the arrival of vast and uncontrollable numbers of migrants (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008, p.15), echoing elements of the extreme right theory of the ‘Great Replacement’ (Froio 2018, p.704).

Economic arguments are commonplace in anti-immigration discourse and here, they reflect the typical topoi of disadvantage and burden (Hart 2010, p.73), in which poverty and unemployment constitute push factors leading Turks to migrate into ‘*job-creating economies*’ (UKIP, 17/12/2014), engendering competition for jobs and resources (FN/RN, 18/05/2013). Beyond these classic arguments, the EU-Turkey Statement and accession process are depicted as a burden to taxpayers. The way in which the negotiations are communicated uncovers the prevalence of subtle Orientalist and Islamophobic discourse:

*They have taken your weakness and **they’ve now decided they’re going to blackmail you.** Not only do they want three billion euros from you this year, **they’re gonna want three billion euros from you every single year.** (UKIP, 02/12/2015)*

With repeated references to blackmail, economic arguments against the agreement are intertwined with Orientalist stereotypes of deceitfulness and cunning (McCarus 1994, p.127). Curtis (2009, p.46) lists the main ideas in what he describes as ‘the first major work in English on Ottoman history’, *The General History of the Turks* (Knolles 1603):

Knolles held that the expansion by the Turks into Europe resulted from craftiness, deceit, and the use of cunning rather than strength; he warned of the danger of trusting promises made by “the Turk devoid of all faith and humanity.”

Although four centuries old, these ideas are replicated in the data, underlining the historical foundations of modern Islamophobic discourse and the importance of intertextual context. This is further highlighted in the selective choice of a Rudyard Kipling quotation (UKIP, 09/03/2016) to insinuate that Turkey will repeatedly swindle the EU. Given recent controversy over racism in his works (Guardian 05/01/2016), as well as his own expression of Orientalist thought (Scott 2011), the decision to cite Kipling to portray Turkey in a negative light must be regarded as ideologically motivated. These subtle yet pervasive strategies demonstrate how ideology can be interwoven with seemingly banal and pragmatic economic arguments.

Regarding ‘kind’ of migration, Turkish migrants are portrayed to be undesirable and culturally incompatible with liberal progressiveness. For example, they are depicted to pose a threat to European women through chauvinistic values and violence. This notion is closely associated with arguments relating to the economy and ‘fake’ refugees; the *single, male (Muslim) migrant* becomes both a symbol of deceptive economic migration under the guise of seeking asylum and of danger through a uniquely sexist outlook:

unprecedented numbers of male migrants coming to Europe who do not share European values, which has resulted in spikes in crimes such as rape and the sexual intimidation of women. (UKIP, 18/10/2017)

Here, modal verbs are avoided to bestow a sense of factual validity on to claims that are unsubstantiated, for example using *'has resulted'* to imply a confirmed causal relationship. Thus, by linking sexual violence with migration so unequivocally, it is presented as an exclusively 'non-European' problem. In so doing, the Islamophobic myth of a uniquely sexist religion and the Orientalist construction of a superior and enlightened West are promoted. While the Muslim identity of these migrants *'who do not share European values'* is not explicitly stated, the context of the widespread instrumentalization and manipulation of feminist ideas by the far right to target Islam (Farris 2012) signifies that the association is presupposed. It reflects a trend towards what Gilroy (2012, p.381) terms 'white victimage', which 'has become an increasingly prominent counterpoint to the fears of an Islamic takeover inside Europe and beyond.'

Terrorism: security and cultural threat

*the wave of people taking up this call also allowed for **infiltration from terrorists opposed to Western values**. (UKIP, 13/09/2016)*

Depictions of cultural threat are typified by Turkey's repeated association with terrorism. As Kundnani (2014, p.22) suggests, 'the political act of labelling certain forms of violence as terrorism is also usually a racialised act'. Indeed, given its articulation with a negatively constructed Turkish people, the notion that Turkey poses a security risk clearly derives directly from its Muslim-majority status and common association with 'dangerous' neighbours. Studies, such as those by Kearns, Betus and Lemieux (2017) and Morin (2016), underline the ways that media framing and coverage portray acts of violence differently according to the perceived identity (i.e. Muslim/non-Muslim) of the attacker, constructing and reinforcing the discourse that terrorism is a uniquely Muslim problem.

This is compounded by the presentation of those not actively engaged in the terrorist act itself as instead implicitly supporting its aims. Immigration from Turkey is portrayed to pose a risk through the infiltration of extremists who preach hate rather than commit violent crimes, or of people who through their silence demonstrate complicity:

Europe's Muslims must do more to root out extremists that exist in their midst. (UKIP, 28/01/2015)

Here, as in Kumar's (2012) myths, 'Europe's Muslims' become a monolithic bloc, which in its supposed silence is found to be inherent violence. By making Muslims responsible for not standing against terrorism and stating that many actively support it (UKIP, 02/12/2015), the group becomes unilaterally culpable for terrorism in the West. It reflects Tuastad's (2003) new barbarism thesis, in which terrorism is disassociated from political motivations and is instead 'seen as deeply rooted in local culture' (ibid., p.595). Violence becomes a cultural characteristic, portrayed almost as innate and biological, rendered dangerous to Europe through migration. Thus, the securitisation of Islam and immigration proves a powerful combination.

Conclusion

In summary, Turkey is constructed as a dangerous *other* in a variety of ways, with an Orientalist and Islamophobic depiction of culture as the principal foundation for this threatening difference. This paper is not the first to note the exclusion of Turkey on these grounds, yet these strategies are often attributed to the construction of a European supra-national identity. However, the strongly Eurosceptic positions of UKIP and the FN/RN signify that they are not engaged in this identity-building process. The research design is intended to draw on the strengths of the methods implemented and mitigate their weaknesses through a combined approach, allowing a multifaceted exploration of the anti-Turkey discourses espoused by these parties.

The way in which ideas are articulated in the data strengthens their effect, and a cumulative notion of danger is acquired through this association between elements, creating a hegemonic discourse around the nodal point of Turkey. Othering is achieved through numerous avenues related to geography, history, politics and civilization, but supposed cultural difference, based on the country's association with Islam, must be understood as the link underpinning all forms. The same is true for its depiction as a danger to Europe; whether outwardly related to the economy, security or sexual violence, a negative construction of Turkish, and specifically Muslim, culture underlies all threat-creation topoi. Islamophobia is woven into the fabric of these exclusions in both subtle and explicit ways, and the prominence of myths deriving from Orientalism reveal the historical foundations of these discourses.

Critically, therefore, a civilizational clash rooted in Orientalist divisions of East and West, as well as Islamophobic myths, is constructed to exclude Turkey permanently from a mythical vision of 'Europeanness'. The transformation of Eurosceptics into Europhiles underlines how the rejection of Turkey does not simply constitute a mode of fostering loyalty to the EU, but is also used to reinforce racist notions of Western superiority.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [KB], upon reasonable request.

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Figures

Figure 1. Articulated signifiers and narrative form